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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 089629

FOR USDEL LOS

FOL WELLINGTON 1734 SENT ACTION SECSTATE GENEVA INFO CANBERRA CINCPAC LONDON MOSCOW OTTAWA PARIS PORT MORESBY SEOUL SUVA TOKYO USUN APR 6, 1978 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 01734

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD, TOKYO FOR RFO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS, EFIS, FJ, NZ
SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY:
- FIJIAN REVERSAL

SUMMARY: THE GOVERNMENT OF FIJI HAS REPORTEDLY PERFORMED A TURN-ABOUT ON THE QUESTION OF A SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY, CASTING THE ENTIRE CONCEPT INTO SOME DOUBT. THE FIJIAN POSITION IS TO BE COMMUNICATED TO AUSTRALIA, NZ AND PNG TODAY IN GENEVA. END SUMMARY

1. GNZ FONMIN ADVISED THE EMBASSY TODAY OF A POLICY RE-VERSAL BY FIJIAN PRIME MINISTER RATU MARA WHICH ON ITS FACE
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APPEARS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT SETBACK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY (SPRFA).

2. ACCORDING TO MFA SOURCES, THE FIJIAN POLICY WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND APRIL 5 IN GENEVA. FIJI ARGUES THAT: (A) SPRFA SHOULD BE SET UP WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

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COMMISSION (SPC) RATHER THAN THE SOUTH PACIFIC BUREAU FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION (SPEC) OR FORUM; (B) NOT ONLY IS THE PNG

"TWO TREATY" APPROACH UNSATISFACTORY, BUT THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANY RPT ANY REGIONAL FISHERY CONVENTION; (C) THE LOS TEXT WILL INCORPORATE PRINCIPLES OF COASTAL STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND THUS OBVIATE THE NEED FOR A SEPARATE REGIONAL CONVENTION; AND (D) IN ANY EVENT, THE GOVERNMENT OF FIJI HAS SERIOUS MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE DRAFT SPRFA CONVENTION.

3. ELABORATING ON THE F NAL POINT, THE FIJIAN SOURCE IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THE NEW ZEALANDERS IN SUVA THAT FIJI CANNOT ACCEPT THE PROPOSITION THAT DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CAN PARTICIPATE ONLY THROUGH THE METROPOLITANS. THEY SAY ALL GOVERNMENTS AND TERRITORIES MUST BE TREATED AS EQUALS. FURTHER, THEY HAVE DIRECTLY ATTACKED THE IDEA OF USG PARTICIPATION, SAYING IT WOULD POSE A MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK AND THAT FIJI IS NOT PREPARED TO COMPROMISE IN ANY WAY ON THE PRINCIPLE OF COASTAL STATE SOVEREIGNTY.

4. THE FIJIAN SOURCE (BELIEVED TO BE KOTOBALAVU) REPORTEDLY MADE SOME ADDITIONAL VAGUE REFERENCE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

FINANCIAL BURDEN OF A REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY AND WONDERED ALOUD ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE SPC SKIPJACK TUNA SURVEY IF A SEPARATE FORUM AGENCY WERE SET UP.

5. MFA UNDERSTANDS RATU MARA HAS WRITTEN TO PNG PRIME MINISTER SOMARE ALONG THE FOREGOING LINES.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE NEW ZEALAND MFA IS STILL TRYING TO PULL DETAILS ON THE FIJIAN POSITION TOGETHER BUT IS UNDERSTANDABLY VERY CONCERNED THAT IT WILL THROW COLD WATER ON THE IDEA OF ANY REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY. THEY BELIEVE THE SIMPLE AND LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR THE FIJIAN TURN-ABOUT IS THAT RATU MARA HAS JUST NOW BECOME INTERESTED IN THE SPRFA AND FOCUSED ON THE PROGRESS WHICH HAS SO FAR BEEN ACHIEVED. SUVA MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL DETAILED INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER. SELDEN UNQUOTE VANCE

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